

Editorials

Don't Trust Intelligence Without Objectivity

As the United States learned at Pearl Harbor and the French at Dienbienphu, foreign intelligence is a matter not wisely entrusted to people with preconceived notions. Times change, and a nation's assumptions about security must change with them.

The irony of Theodore Sorensen's rejection as CIA chief was that it resulted from no particular preconception of his. Quite the contrary; it was his *lack* of demonstrated commitment to one current theory of national defense—the one that military growth must take precedence over national economic health—that undid Sorensen before he could even be heard on the subject.

There is, unfortunately, an equal irony to the second choice for CIA chief announced yesterday by President Carter.

Admiral Stansfield Turner, a Rhodes scholar as well as an Annapolis graduate, may possess all the intellectual equipment and command experience required to direct the nation's intelligence apparatus. But as a career military officer running an agency supposed to be independent of military control, he must prove he possesses the very objectivity that seemed in some circles to disqualify Sorensen for the job.

Turner's Navy rank will be heavy baggage to carry when the hard judgments are made on the level of Soviet defense spending. And inevitably he will have to face questions whether it was his own tal-

ent that motivated the appointment, or the president's desire to offset the criticism first of Sorensen and now of Paul Warnke, his nominee for disarmament negotiator.

The first CIA director, the late General Walter Bedell Smith, demonstrated that a military background need not prevent a man from being a dedicated, broad-gauge public servant. But neither is it an automatic qualification—not in an age when economics, resources and technology influence the strategic balance at least as much as weaponry and manpower. Turner's confirmation hearings should bore in to make sure he understands the new demands on foreign intelligence as well as the old.